United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1157
8 June 1992

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General recommends that mandate and strength of United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia be enlarged to handle full operational responsibility for Sarajevo airport, to ensure delivery of humanitarian aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Secretary-General calls off visit to Chile due to poor weather conditions yesterday.

+ Indigenous peoples demand to be considered equally at United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, finds improvement in security situation in Kompong Thom region.

+ Secretary-General appoints General Ricardo Galarza of Uruguay as Commander of United Nations Observer Group in India and Pakistan.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the Security Council enlarge the mandate and strength of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) to "take over full operational responsibility for the functioning and security of Sarajevo airport". The recommendation follows an agreement reached on Friday, 5 June, with the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and with the Bosnian Serb side to reopen Sarajevo airport for the delivery of humanitarian supplies under the exclusive authority of the United Nations.

In his report to the Council, dated 6 June, the Secretary-General called the agreement "a significant breakthrough in the tragic conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina". Under resolution 757 (1992) of 30 May, which imposed wide-ranging sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, the Council had demanded that "all parties and others concerned" create the necessary conditions for unimpeded humanitarian assistance to that region, including the establishment of a security zone encompassing Sarajevo and its airport. The Council asked the Secretary-General to use his good offices in achieving that objective.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

According to the Secretary-General's proposal, UNPROFOR would verify the withdrawal of anti-aircraft weapons systems from within range of the airport and its approaches and monitor the concentration of artillery, mortar, and ground-to-ground missile systems in specified areas. He proposed further that the new operation be implemented in four phases immediately following approval by the Council, and that a fifth UNPROFOR sector headquarters be established at Sarajevo in order to undertake the new tasks arising for the Force.

According to an addendum to the report, the additional cost of the enlargement of UNPROFOR for a four-month period until mid-October 1992 would amount to $20.1 million. Thereafter, the monthly cost for the enlargement would amount to some $3 million. A United Nations spokesman cautioned that the cost might go up beyond the initial estimates.

The Secretary-General pointed in his report to "significant risks" with regard to the operation, saying that "many earlier agreements in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been broken". However, he wrote, the humanitarian emergency in Sarajevo and elsewhere in that Republic "grows daily more severe and there is an ever more urgent need to bring the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina under control".

The Security Council held consultations concerning the Secretary-General's proposal throughout today.
Document S/24075 & S/24075/Add.1

* * *

Poor weather conditions in southern South America on Sunday forced the Secretary-General to postpone his official visit to Chile scheduled to have begun today.

He was due to depart yesterday for Santiago from Montevideo, Uruguay, where he had been on an official visit. The decision to cancel the trip was made after several hours of waiting at Carrasco International Airport and a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of Chile, Enrique Silva Cimma. The Secretary-General was to have met today with Chilean President Patricio Aylwin Azocar and the Foreign Minister. He said in a cable sent later to President Aylwin that he hoped to visit Chile in the near future.

Weather permitting, the Secretary-General planned to return to Rio de Janeiro this afternoon, so that he can resume his participation in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

* * *

Indigenous peoples are demanding to be considered equally at the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. According to a report today, indigenous peoples also want official status as "First Nations" in the Organization. The United Nations has declared 1993 as the International Year

(more)

of Indigenous Peoples of the World, and such recognition, they say, will guarantee their "real and equal participation" in the decision-making process on all issues affecting their territories.

In a press statement today, Tony Mercredi, representative of Canada's Assembly of First Nations, said indigenous groups had come to the environmental conference as non-governmental organizations, but they had been unable to speak about their "plight and suffering".

Indigenous groups at the Conference have pointed out that for centuries they have been subjected to "colonialist, systematic exploitation and destruction of their natural resources". They cite a wide range of "environmental disasters" such as toxic contamination, hydro-electric projects, dams, deforestation, mining, militarization and other environmental disasters, which they say have eroded their traditional lifestyles. The groups have said that what is at stake at this time is the survival of civilizations whose wisdom and knowledge are crucial to the continuity of mankind.

* * *

There has been a significant improvement in the security situation in the Kompong Thom province, according to the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi.

During a visit to the region over the weekend accompanied by Force Commander Lieutenant-General John Sanderson, Mr. Akashi noted that cease-fire violations in the province were decreasing, and the people were responding positively to the increasing United Nations presence. However, difficulties remained, especially along Route 12, where the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea had recently laid new mines. The demining of the route could be accomplished quickly, General Sanderson said, preferably by those who laid the mines. Some 7,000 armed forces from all four factions are scheduled to be cantoned in this region.

Phase two of the Paris Agreements of October 1991 between the four Cambodian parties is expected to begin on 13 June. On that day, the process of regrouping and cantonment will begin with the armed forces placing themselves under the control of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to be disarmed and await demobilization.

* * *

The Secretary-General has decided to appoint General Ricardo Jorge Galarzo Chans of Uruguay as Chief Military Observer of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), with effect from 26 June. He will replace Brigadier-General Jeremiah Enright of Ireland, who will be retiring from military service.

General Galarza, who began his military career in 1952, is presently the Commanding Officer of the Second Armed Division in Uruguay. Recently, he

(more)

served as Chief of his country's delegation to the Inter-American Defense Board and as Technical Advisor to Uruguay's delegation to the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington.

* *** *